An Examination of Seven Reasons for Sunday-Keeping



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“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” *2 Timothy 3:16, 17*.*ESRS 2.1*

IN this text we are assured that every word of the sacred Scriptures was given by the Holy Spirit; that every doctrine which men should believe is therein revealed; that every fault is therein reproved; that every error is corrected by its words of truth; and that perfect instruction in all righteousness is therein given.*ESRS 2.2*

The design of its Author in providing such a book was, that the man of God might thereby be made perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. This is the treasure which God has given to his church. Nor is this all that he has done. To those who are willing to obey the teachings of his word he has promised the Spirit to guide them into all truth.*ESRS 2.3*

To men thus situated, Jehovah thus speaks: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” *1 Thessalonians 5:21*. That is, bring every part of your faith and practice to the test of God’s sure word; ask the Holy Spirit’s aid, that your mind may be delivered from prejudice, and your understanding enlightened in the word of truth. Then, what you find revealed in that word, hold fast; it is of priceless value; but relinquish at once every precept or doctrine not therein recorded, lest you make the doctrines of men of equal weight with the commandments of God. “What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord.”*ESRS 2.4*

As the first day of the week is now almost universally observed in the place of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, we design in this tract to examine the grounds on which this observance rests. Those who are willing to submit their opinion to the test of Scripture and of reason are invited to unite with us in the examination of this subject. For what reason do men prefer the first day of the week to

the ancient Sabbath of the Lord? On what authority do men continually violate the day which God sanctified, and commanded mankind to keep holy? Come, now, and let us reason together. Here is the commandment which it is said has been changed:-*ESRS 3.1*

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” *Exodus 20:8-11*.*ESRS 3.2*

That this commandment requires men to remember and to keep holy the rest-day of the Creator, which he hallowed at the close of the first week of time, none can deny. We now ask for the authority for the change of this commandment.*ESRS 4.1*

Papists believe that their church had power to change the fourth commandment; and, on that authority alone, they are perfectly satisfied in observing the first day of the week.*ESRS 4.2*

Protestants deny the authority of the church or Rome, and attempt to vindicate the change of the Sabbath by an appeal to the Bible. This is what we wish them to do. We ask them, therefore, to present a single text in which it is said that God has changed his Sabbath to the first day of the week. The advocates of the change have none to offer. If they cannot present such a text, will they give us one which testifies that God ever blessed and sanctified the first day of the week? Its observers admit that they have none to present. But will they not give us *one* text in which men are required to keep the first day holy, as a Sabbath unto the Lord? They acknowledge that they have none. How, then, do they dare to exalt the first day of the week above the Sabbath of the Lord, which the commandment requires us to remember, and keep holy?*ESRS 4.3*

The Bible thoroughly furnishes the man of God unto all good works. Can Sunday-keeping be a very good work when the Bible has never said anything in its favor? Or, if it is a good work, can men be

very thoroughly furnished in its defense when God has said nothing in its favor? Instead of being a good work, must it not be a fearful sin against God to thus pervert the fourth commandment, when once the mind has been enlightened on the subject?*ESRS 4.4*

But there are several reasons urged for the observance of the first day of the week, which we will here notice.*ESRS 5.1*

FIRST REASON. *Redemption is greater than creation; therefore we ought to keep the day of Christ's resurrection, instead of the ancient Sabbath of the Lord*.*ESRS 5.2*

Where has God said this? Sunday-keepers are compelled to admit that he never did say it. What right, then, has any man to make such an assertion, and then to base the change of the Sabbath upon it? But suppose that redemption is greater than creation who knows that we ought to keep the first day of the week on that account? God never required men to keep any day as a memorial of redemption. But if it were a duty to observe one day of the week for this reason, most certainly the crucifixion day presents the strongest claims. It is not said that we have redemption through Christ's resurrection; but it is said that we have redemption through the shedding of his blood. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." *Revelation 5:9*. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." *Ephesians 1:7*; *Colossians 1:14*; *Hebrews 9:12, 15*.*ESRS 5.3*

Then redemption is through the death of the Lord Jesus; consequently the day on which he shed his precious blood to redeem us, and said, "It is finished," *John 19:30*, is the day that should be kept as a memorial of redemption, if any should be observed for that purpose.*ESRS 6.1*

Nor can it be urged that the resurrection day is the most remarkable day in the history of redemption. It needs but a word to prove that, in this respect, it is far exceeded by the day of the crucifixion. Which is the more remarkable event, the act of Jehovah in giving his beloved and only Son to die for a race of rebels, or the act of the

Father in raising that beloved Son from the dead? There is only one answer that can be given: It was not remarkable that God should raise his Son from the dead; but the act of the Father in giving his Son to die for sinners was a spectacle of redeeming love on which the universe might gaze, and adore the wondrous love of God to all eternity. Who can wonder that the sun was vailed in darkness, and that all nature trembled at the sight! The crucifixion day, therefore, has far greater claims than the day of the resurrection. God has not enjoined the observance of either; and is it not a fearful act to make void the commandments of God by that wisdom which is folly in his sight1 *1 Corinthians 1:19, 20*.*ESRS 6.2*

But if we would commemorate redemption, there is no necessity of robbing the Lord's rest-day of its holiness in order to do it. When truth takes from us our errors, it always has something better to take their place. So the false memorial of redemption being taken out of the way, the word presents in its stead those which are true. God has provided us with memorials, bearing his own signature; and these we may observe with the blessing of Heaven. Would you commemorate the death of our Lord? You need not keep the day of his crucifixion. The Bible tells you how to do it.*ESRS 7.1*

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." *1 Corinthians 11:23-26*.*ESRS 7.2*

Would you commemorate the burial and resurrection of the Saviour? You need not keep the first day of the week. The Lord ordained a very different and far more appropriate memorial. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his

death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." *Romans 6:3-5*. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." *Colossians 2:12*.*ESRS 8.1*

It is true that the professed church have changed this ordinance to sprinkling, so that this divine memorial of the Lord's resurrection is destroyed. And that they may add sin to sin, they lay hold of the Lord's Sabbath and change it to the first day of the week, thus destroying the sacred memorial of the Creator's rest, that they may have a memorial of Christ's resurrection! "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant." When will the professed church cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? Not until the "inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left." *Isaiah 24:5, 6*.*ESRS 8.2*

SECOND REASON*The disciples met on the day of our Lord's resurrection to commemorate that event, and the Saviour sanctioned this meeting by uniting with them*. *John 20:19*.*ESRS 9.1*

If every word of this were truth, it would not prove that the Sabbath of the Lord has been changed. But to show the utter absurdity of this inference, listen to a few facts. The disciples did not then believe that their Lord had been raised from the dead, but were assembled for the purpose of eating a common meal, and to seclude themselves from the Jews. The words of Mark and of John make this clear: "He appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. And they went and told it unto the residue; neither believed they them. Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen." *Mark 16:12-14*. John says: "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." *John 20:19*.*ESRS 9.2*

It is a fact, therefore, that the disciples were not commemorating the resurrection of the Saviour; it is equally evident that they had not

the slightest idea of a change of the Sabbath. At the burial of the Saviour, the women who had followed him to the tomb returned and prepared spices and ointments to embalm him; the Sabbath drew on; they rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment; and when the Sabbath was past, they came to the sepulcher upon the first day of the week to embalm their Lord. *Luke 23:55, 56*; *24:1*. They kept the Sabbath, according to the commandment, and resumed their labor on the first day of the week.*ESRS 9.3*

THIRD REASON*After eight days, Jesus met with his disciples again*. *John 20:26*. *This must have been the first day of the week, which is thereby proved to be the Christian Sabbath*.*ESRS 10.1*

Were it certain that this occurred on the first day of the week, it would not furnish a single particle of proof that that day had become the Sabbath of the Lord. But who can be certain that "after eight days" means just a week? It would be nearer a literal construction of the language to conclude that this was upon the ninth day. As an illustration, read *Matthew 17:1*: "And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John," etc. Now turn to *Luke 9:28*: "And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter, and John, and James," etc. Then, "after six days" is about *eight days* in this instance. But if "after eight days" means just a week, how does this prove that Sunday has taken the place of the Lord's Sabbath? Rather, how does it prove that Sunday has become the Christian Sabbath, when there is not a particle of evidence that either Christ or his apostles ever rested on that day? There is no such term as Christian Sabbath found in the Bible. The only weekly Sabbath named in the Bible is called the Sabbath of the Lord.*ESRS 10.2*

Was the act of Christ in appearing to his disciples sufficient to constitute the day on which it occurred the Sabbath? If so, why did he next select a fishing day as the time to manifest himself to them *John 21*. If it is not sufficient, then the Sunday on which he was first seen of them, the fishing day on which they next saw him, and the Thursday on which he was last seen of them, may not be Sabbaths. It was not very remarkable that Christ should find his disciples together, inasmuch as they had one common abode. *Acts 1:13*.*ESRS 11.1*

FOURTH REASON*The Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost, which was the first day of the week. Therefore, the first day of the week should be observed instead of the Sabbath of the Lord*. *Acts 2:1, 2*.*ESRS 11.2*

Admitting that the day of Pentecost occurred upon the first day of the week, it remains to be proved that that day thereby became the Sabbath. But that it was the feast of Pentecost, and not the first day of the week, that God designed to honor, the following facts demonstrate:-*ESRS 11.3*

1. While the day of Pentecost is distinctly named, the day of the week on which it occurred is passed in silence.*ESRS 11.4*

2. The disciples had been engaged in earnest prayer for the space of ten days; for the day of Pentecost was fifty days from the resurrection of Christ, and forty of those days he spent with his disciples. *Acts 1*. Forty days from his resurrection would expire on Thursday, the day of his ascension. A period of ten days *after* his ascension on Thursday would include two first-days, the last of which would be the day of Pentecost. If the design of God had been to honor the first day of the week, why did not the Holy Ghost descend on the first of those first-days? Why must the day of Pentecost come before the Holy Ghost could descend? This answer is obvious: It was not the design of Heaven to honor the first day of the week, but to mark the antitype of the feast of Pentecost. Hence the first day of the week is passed in silence.*ESRS 11.5*

The slaying of the paschal lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month had met its antitype in the death of the Lamb of God on that day. *Exodus 12*; *John 19*; *1 Corinthians 5:7*. The offering of the first-fruits on the sixteenth day of the first month had met its antitype in the resurrection of our Lord on that day, the first-fruits of them that slept. *Leviticus 23*; *1 Corinthians 15:20-23*. It remained that the day of Pentecost, fifty days later, should also meet its antitype. *Leviticus 23:15-21*. The fulfillment of that type is what the pen of inspiration has recorded in *Acts 2:1, 2*. God has spoken nothing in this place respecting a change of his Sabbath. Yet grave men, calling themselves Doctors of Divinity, consider this text one of their strongest testimonies for their so-called Christian Sabbath. They

might be profited by this advice of the wise man: “Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.” *Proverbs 30:6*.*ESRS 12.1*

FIFTH REASON*Paul once broke bread upon the first day of the week at Troas. Hence this day was observed as the Christian Sabbath*. *Acts 20:7*.*ESRS 12.2*

We answer that at one period the apostolic church at Jerusalem broke bread every day. *Acts 2:42-46*. If a single instance of breaking bread at Troas upon the first day of the week was quite sufficient to constitute it the Sabbath, would not the continued practice of the apostolic church at Jerusalem in breaking bread *every* day be amply sufficient to make every day a Sabbath? Moreover, as the act of the great Head of the church in breaking bread must be quite as important as that of his servant Paul, must not the day of the crucifixion be pre-eminently the Christian Sabbath, as Christ instituted and performed this ordinance on the evening with which that day commenced1 *1 Corinthians 11:23-26*.*ESRS 12.3*

But on what day of the week did this act of Paul’s occur? For, if it is of sufficient importance to make the day of its occurrence the future Sabbath of the church, the day is worth determining. The act of breaking bread was after midnight; for Paul preached to the disciples until midnight, then healed Eutychus, and after this attended to breaking bread. *Acts 20:7-11*. If, as time is reckoned at the present day, the first day of the week terminated at midnight, then Paul’s act of breaking bread was performed upon the second day of the week, or Monday, which should henceforth be regarded as the Christian Sabbath, if breaking bread on a day makes it a Sabbath.*ESRS 13.1*

But, if the Bible method of commencing the day, viz., from sunset, was followed, it would appear that the disciples came together at the close of the Sabbath for an evening meeting, as the apostle was to depart in the morning. If it was not an evening meeting, why did they have many lights there? Paul preached unto them until midnight, and then broke bread with the disciples early in the morning of the first day of the week. Did this act constitute that day

the Sabbath? If so, then why did Paul, as soon as it was light, start on his long journey to Jerusalem? If Paul believed that Sunday was the Christian Sabbath, why did he thus openly violate it? If he did not believe it had become the Sabbath, why should you? And why do you grasp, as evidence that the Sabbath has been changed, a single instance in which an evening meeting was held on Sunday, while you overlook the fact that it was the custom of this same apostle to preach every Sabbath, not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles? *Acts 13:14, 42, 44*; *16:13*; *17:2*; *18:4*.*ESRS 13.2*

Paul broke bread on the first day of the week, and then immediately started on his long journey to Jerusalem. So that this, the strongest argument for the first day of the week, furnishes direct proof that Sunday is not the Sabbath.*ESRS 14.1*

SIXTH REASON. *Paul commanded the church at Corinth to take up a public collection on the first day of the week; therefore it follows that this must have been a day of public worship, and consequently is the Christian Sabbath*. *1 Corinthians 16:2*.*ESRS 14.2*

We answer, It is a remarkable fact that Paul enjoins exactly the reverse of a public collection. He does not say, Place your alms in the public treasury on the first day of the week; but he says, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you *lay by him* in store."*ESRS 14.3*

J. W. Morton, in his "Vindication of the True Sabbath," pp.51,52, says:-*ESRS 14.4*

"The apostle simply orders that each one of the Corinthian brethren should lay up *at home* some portion of his weekly gains on the first day of the week. The whole question turns upon the meaning of the expression, 'by him;' and I marvel greatly how you can imagine that it means 'in the collection-box of the congregation.' Greenfield, in his Lexicon, translates the Greek term, *'by one's self, i.e., at home*.' Two Latin versions, the Vulgate and that of Castellio, render it, *'apud se*,' with one's self, at home. Three French translations, those of Martin, Osterwald, and De Sacy, *'chez soi*,' at his own house, at home. The German of Luther, *'bei sich selbst*,' by himself, at home. The Dutch, *'by hemselven*,' same as the German. The Italian of Diodati, *'appresso di se,'* in his own presence, at home. The

Spanish of Felipe Scio, *'en su casa,'* in his own house. The Portuguese of Ferreira, *'para isso,'* with himself. The Swedish, *'noer sig self,'* near himself. I know not how much this list of authorities might be swelled; for I have not examined one translation that differs from those quoted above."*ESRS 14.5*

The text, therefore, does not prove that the Corinthian church was assembled for public worship on that day; but, on the contrary, it does prove that each must be at his own home where he could examine his worldly affairs, and lay by himself in store as God had prospered him. If each one should thus, from week to week, collect his earnings, when the apostle should come their bounty would be ready, and each would be able to present to him what he had gathered. So that, if the first-day Sabbath has no better foundation than the inference drawn from this text, it truly rests upon sliding sand.*ESRS 15.1*

SEVENTH REASON*John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, which was the first day of the week*. *Revelation 1:10*.*ESRS 15.2*

This is the kind of reasoning which the advocates of Sunday are invariably obliged to adopt. But we ask, What right have they to assume the very point which they ought to prove? This text, it is true, furnishes direct proof that there is a day in the gospel dispensation which the Lord claims as his; but is there one text in the Bible which testifies that the first day of the week is the Lord's day? There is not one. Has God ever claimed that day as his? Never. Has God ever claimed any day as his, and reserved it to himself? He has. "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." *Genesis 2:3*. "To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord." *Exodus 16:23*. "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." *Exodus 20:10*. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day," etc. *Isaiah 58:13*. "Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." *Mark 2:28*.*ESRS 15.3*

Then the seventh day is the day which God reserved to himself when he gave to man the other six; and this day he calls his holy day. This is the day which the New Testament declares the Son of

man to be Lord of.*ESRS 16.1*

Is there one testimony in the Scriptures that the Lord of the Sabbath has put away his holy day and chosen another? Not one. Then that day which the Bible designates as the Lord's day is none other than the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.*ESRS 16.2*

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